Parking Policies to Support Smart Growth

Parking is consistently ranked as a top challenge by Bay Area jurisdictions looking to create more vibrant places through transit-oriented development and infill in existing communities. MTC conducted a study to help define approaches that work.

In Print and On the Web

REFORMING PARKING POLICIES TO SUPPORT SMART GROWTH

Toolbox/Handbook: Parking Best Practices & Strategies For Supporting Transit Oriented Development In the San Francisco Bay Area

This new report showcases innovative parking strategies to support smart growth, transit-oriented development and infill. It serves as a guide for communities interested in planning and implementing parking policies and programs that are supportive of Smart Growth and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). The focus is on downtowns, neighborhoods and transit station areas in which a major investment has been made to provide regional and local transit accessibility. In order to maximize the value of that investment and to discourage the solo use of the automobile for travel, the report assists communities in identifying the TOD supportive parking policies and improvements that are best suited to their individual characteristics.

To order a free copy contact the MTC/ABAG Library at: **www.mtc.ca.gov/library/** or **510.817.5836**.

Potential Policies for Different Types of Areas

The appropriate mix of parking policies and parking management strategies is unique for each agency and jurisdiction. The mix must consider various factors, such as local objectives, existing parking occupancy, investment that is occurring, auto ownership and alternative travel mode availability.

STRATEGIES	Regional Center	City Center	Urban Neighborhoods	Suburban Center	Town Center	Transit Neighborhood	Small Town
1 Transit/TOD Supportive Policies							
Transit Incentive Programs	■	■	■	■	■		
Transit Friendly Parking Design	■	■	■	■	■		
Transit Supportive Zoning	■	■	■	■			
Carsharing	■	■	■	■			
Walkability and Wayfinding	■	■	■	■	■		
2. Parking Requirements							
Reduced Parking Requirements	■	■	■	■	■		
TOD Friendly Parking Requirements	■	■	■	■			
Parking Maximums	■	■	■				
Shared Parking	■	■	■	■	■		
3. Parking Pricing							
On-street Parking Pricing	■	■	■	■			
Variable Rate Parking Pricing	■	■	■	■			
Coordinated Off-street and On-street Pricing	■	■	■	■			
Unbundled Parking	■	■	■	■			
Parking Cash-Out	■	■	■	■			
4. Parking Management Strategies							
Parking Payment Technology	■	■	■	■			
Parking Database	■	■	■	■		■	
Real-time Parking Information	■	■	■				
5. Parking Districts							
Assessment Districts		■	■	■	■		
Revenue Districts	■	■	■	■	■		
Residential Permit Parking	■	■	■	■			
6. Parking Financing							
In-Lieu Fees	■	■	■	■			■
Risk Fund	■	■	■				
Parking Occupancy Tax	■	■					
Parking Tax by Space	■	■	■	■			
Tax Exemptions and Variable Rate Tax	■	■		■			

Key Steps to Defining Parking Polices:

To define strategies that will work for your community:

Step 1: Define your community's goals for the character of land use.

Step 2: Use the above matrix to explore potential policies that may serve your community's goals.

Step 3: Review the experience of others for best practices that relate to your local conditions and community's aspirations.

Step 4: Work with your community to define the best strategies – gather data, explore options, solicit community opinions and ideas, and finalize steps for implementation.

Best Practices and Innovative Policies

A number of cities are now adopting parking policies to support smart growth and TOD, customized to suit their local conditions. Key innovative parking strategies include efforts to:

Implement transit/TOD supportive policies – including transit passes and carsharing;

Reduce parking requirements – including parking maximums and shared parking for complementary uses;

Price Parking – including unbundling parking costs from housing, cashing out of employee parking benefits and metering;

Manage and finance parking districts – establish programs to provide benefits for local residents and/or businesses;

Design parking to fit within the community – consider "wrapping" to improve the experience for pedestrians and landscaping/permeable surfaces to improve the environmental impacts.

The Best Practices Report describes a variety of innovative parking management strategies, walkability tools and transit-oriented development principles and practices to reduce parking demand and make it easier to reach destinations by public transportation, walking and bicycling. These Best Practices are described briefly in the Toolbox and in detail in a technical paper with examples from a variety of cities. Both are available at:

www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart_growth/ parking_seminar/BestPractices.pdf

For more information, please contact Valerie Knepper at vknepper@mtc.ca.gov

Effectiveness: A Simple Look at Major Strategies

Different parking policies have a range of effectiveness in reducing parking demand, depending on various local factors such as mix of land uses, degree of mode choice, development density and the cost of parking versus other modes in the area. General levels of effectiveness are shown below:

Policy/Program	Potential Effectiveness (percent reduction in demand)
Parking Pricing	**HIGH** **TYPICALLY 5-30%** Depending on the amount of the parking fee and the surrounding/controls on parking
Shared Parking	**MEDIUM/HIGH** **TYPICALLY 10-20%** Depending on the mix of land uses and parking demand in relatively close proximity
Reduced Parking Requirements	**MEDIUM** **TYPICALLY 10-15%** Depending on how close the requirements are to demand rates
Unbundling and Cash-Out Options	**MEDIUM** **TYPICALLY 10-15%** Depending on the price, demand and convenience of parking
Transit Passes and Incentives	**MEDIUM/LOW** **TYPICALLY 5-10%** Depending on how close the requirements are to demand rates. Depends on transit access + relative convenience between transit and destinations + price/income levels
Car Sharing	**LOW/MEDIUM** **TYPICALLY 3-5%+** Depending on the auto-ownership levels, density and level of mixed use development and transit quality — may be much higher in the right locations in coordination with other policies

Technical Parking Model CD

The Toolbox comes with a CD that includes a technical parking model built as an Access database to estimate parking demand for different types of land uses, with adjustments based on sharing of parking, transit availability, pricing and other key factors of the local area that impact the demand for parking.

www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart_growth/ parking_seminar/Parking_Model_files.zip

Smart Parking Seminar

MTC hosted a training seminar — attended by over 125 participants — that explored effective local strategies, provided guidance in using the Toolbox and CD, and summarized the eight Bay Area case studies that were part of this effort.

For more information on the seminar go to:

www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart_growth/ parking_seminar/
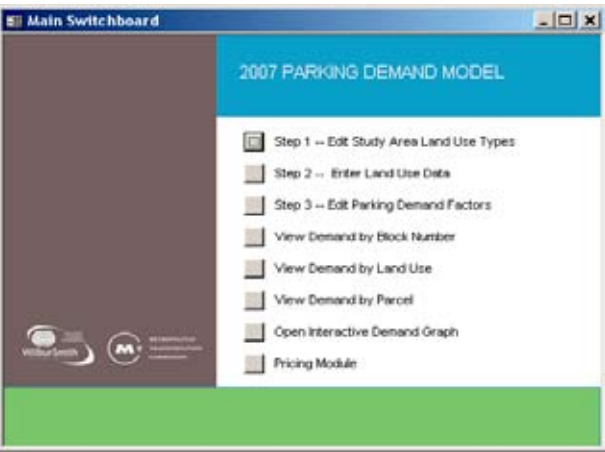
REPRESENTATIVE PARKING REQUIREMENTS
(in spaces per unit)

Location Types

Land Use	Unit	Regional Center		City Center Urban Neighborhods		Suburban Center/ Town Center		Transit Neighborhood		Rural/Small Town	
		Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Residential	Dwelling	0.25	1.00	0.50	1.25	1.00	1.50	1.25	2.25	1.50	2.50
Office	1000 sq.ft	0.10	0.75	0.25	1.25	2.00	3.00	2.25	3.33	3.00	4.00
Retail	1000 sq.ft	0.50	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.50	2.50	2.50	4.00	3.00	4.00
Restaurant	1000 sq.ft	1.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	4.00	8.00	8.00	12.00